



JOHN ENGLER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
LANSING

DAN WYANT
DIRECTOR

TURTLES: HEALTH ADVISORY SHEET

(Pursuant to Act 424 Public Act of 1988)

Michigan Department of Agriculture
Animal Industry Division
P.O. Box 30017
Lansing, MI 48909
(517) 373-1077

PURPOSE

1. Pursuant to federal law (Title 21 CFR 1240.62), the sale of viable turtle eggs or live turtle with a carapace (shell) length less than four inches is generally prohibited in both interstate and intrastate commerce.
2. All viable turtle eggs or turtles with a carapace length of less than four inches sold in Michigan under one of the exemptions in the federal law must be accompanied with this Health Advisory Sheet. One exemption allows for sale of small turtles for bona fide scientific, educational or exhibition purposes but not for use as pets. The sale of small turtles as pets is illegal. Other exemptions are for export only and non-business purpose. (Refer to federal law for details.)
3. This Health Advisory Sheet describes the potential risk to children and adults of contracting salmonellosis from turtles.

TURTLES AND SALMONELLA

1. Salmonella infection (salmonellosis) is commonly associated with turtles. Infected turtles look healthy but still carry the disease and pass the disease on to humans. There is no effective way to make turtles permanently salmonella free. Even turtles treated with antibiotics can carry salmonella.
2. Signs of salmonellosis in humans include fever, headache, stomach cramps, diarrhea, and vomiting. The disease can be especially severe in infants and the elderly. Salmonellosis can cause death. If you, a family member, or a person in your classroom or laboratory experience symptoms of illness as described, be sure to inform your physician that you have a turtle and may have salmonellosis.
3. To help prevent contracting salmonella from your turtle, take the following precautions:
 - Do not allow the turtle or the turtle's water near your mouth.
 - Wash hands thoroughly after touching the turtle or the turtle's cage or water.
 - Change the turtle's water frequently.
 - Do not change the water in the same location where food is prepared for human consumption.
 - Do not feed the turtle raw meat or anything containing raw eggs.